

Case 2829

***Notonecta obliqua* Gallén in Thunberg, 1787 (Insecta, Heteroptera):
proposed conservation of the specific name**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the specific name of the backswimmer species *Notonecta obliqua* Gallén in Thunberg, 1787 by the suppression of the unused senior subjective synonym *Notonecta marginata* Müller, 1776.

1. Müller (1776, p. 104) briefly described *Notonecta marginata* by stating 'elytris nigris: margine suturaque luteis' (= elytra black, sutural margins yellow). The origin of the material was not specified, but since the book dealt mainly with the fauna of Denmark it can be assumed to have been Danish. The material no longer exists (Horn & Kahle 1936, p. 184), and the identity of *N. marginata* has remained unclear although another of Müller's names, *N. glauca* (1776, pp. 103–104), has generally been used.

2. Gallén (1787, p. 61, footnote) described *Notonecta obliqua* (as *N. obliqua*) but gave no type locality. The original material does not seem to exist any longer (see Hungerford, 1933, p. 53).

3. References to *Notonecta marginata* Müller have been as follows: (1) Gmelin (1790, p. 2119) repeated the original description and listed the distribution as Denmark, also stating in a footnote that this taxon did not necessarily belong to the genus *Notonecta*. (2) Turton (1802, p. 606) translated Gmelin's (1790) text into English as follows: 'Upper-wings black, the edge and suture yellow', thereby considerably changing the original description and omitting the footnote. (3) Reuter (1888, p. 282) listed the species as a possible synonym of *Cymatia coleoptrata* (Fabricius, [1777], p. 298), a corixid which has yellowish longitudinal stripes on the clavus and corium but not along the sutural margins. (4) Kirkaldy (1897, pp. 419–421) treated it as a variety of *N. glauca* Linnaeus, 1758 (p. 439) and as a synonym of *N. furcata* Fabricius, 1794, p. 58. (5) Oshanin (1910, p. 975) likewise treated *marginata* as a variety of *glauca* and a synonym of *furcata*, but two years later (1912, p. 91) qualified the synonymy with a question mark. (6) Esaki (1928, p. 69) listed it under *N. obliqua obliqua* as *glauca* var. *marginata*, referring to Kirkaldy (1897) and stated (p. 75): 'Kirkaldy identified this species, *Notonecta furcata*, auct., with *Notonecta marginata* Müller'. Esaki then repeated Müller's short original description, said that he did not agree with Kirkaldy (1897), incorrectly stated that the description did not agree with *N. obliqua*, and continued by saying that '*N. marginata* is most

probably identical with one of the *Corixa* (sensu lat.) species, as the description covers all the forms which are common in Denmark, and *marginata* was placed by Müller between *Notonecta striata* and *N. minutissima*, both of which are Corixids.' (7) Hungerford (1933, p. 53) repeated and apparently accepted Esaki's (1928) discussion.

4. The descriptions favour Kirkaldy's (1897) view that *N. marginata* Müller is conspecific with *N. furcata* Fabricius, which in turn is a synonym of *N. obliqua*. Although the hemelytral suture of many corixid species is a narrow yellowish line, in the whole of Europe there is no species of CORIXIDAE with black hemelytra. On the other hand, in *Notonecta obliqua* (NOTONECTIDAE) the hemelytra are black, and on both sides of the suturae there are yellow stripes exactly as stated by Müller (1776) for his *N. marginata*, which thus has priority over *N. obliqua*. However, resurrecting this long-unused name would cause considerable confusion since *N. obliqua* is well known in the recent literature (for example, Bernhard, 1985, p. 17; Nieser, 1978, p. 283; Savage, 1989, 15 entries; a further 11 references by 15 authors over the last 45 years are held by the Commission Secretariat).

5. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the specific name *marginata* Müller, 1776, as published in the binomen *Notonecta marginata*, for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *obliqua* Gallén in Thunberg, 1787, as published in the binomen *Notonecta obliqua*;
- (3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *marginata* Müller, 1776, as published in the binomen *Notonecta marginata* and as suppressed in (1) above.

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